

### III. REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are amended.

Claims 1-5 are patentable under 35 USC 103(a) over Crofoot (US 4026082), Snyder (US 6601356) and Crute, Jr. (US 2834278, hereinafter "Crute"). Claim 1 recites a rectangular panel of unitary construction molded from durable plastic composition with an integral flat outer surface surrounded by an integral recessed peripheral border, the recessed peripheral border being recessed relative to the flat outer surface. These features are not disclosed or suggested by the combination of Crofoot, Snyder and Crute.

Crofoot discloses a vent frame having a peripheral wall (1) encircling a rectangular opening. An external flange (2) projects outwardly from the outer end of the peripheral wall (1) and an internal flange (3) projects inwardly from the inner end of the peripheral wall (1) (Col. 2, L. 12-18). A sheet cover (10) (See Figs. 2 and 3), which is separate from the vent frame, can be inserted into the vent frame. The cover (10) is pushed inwardly through the outer end of the peripheral wall (1) with the flanges (11) projecting outwardly such that the outer edges of the flanges (11) will engage the peripheral wall (1) first. As the cover (10) is pressed farther inward while being maintained parallel to the plane of the outer end of the peripheral wall (1), contact of the flanges with the peripheral wall (1) will fold the flanges progressively away from the plane of the cover sheet (10) until the roots of the flanges engage the peripheral wall (1) as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3 of Crofoot. Further movement of the cover (10) inwardly relative to the peripheral wall (1) is arrested and the resiliency of the flanges (11) provides a seal between the cover (10) and the

peripheral wall (1) and will deter inadvertent movement of the cover outward toward the outer end of the peripheral wall. (Col. 3, L. 41-53).

Thus, because the cover (10) is separate from the vent frame, Crofoot cannot disclose an air vent cover comprising a rectangular panel of unitary construction molded from durable plastic composition having the features recited in Applicant's claim 1. Crofoot only discloses a cover (10) having folding flanges (11) for securing the cover (10) inside the vent frame and nothing more.

The flange portion of Crofoot referred to by the Examiner in the rejection of claim 1 is the flange (2) of the vent frame. This flange (2) of the vent frame does not mount the cover (10) to the wall as suggested by the Examiner for the reasons described above (i.e. the cover is held in place within the frame by the folding flanges (11)). Likewise, the peripheral border (1) referred to by the Examiner at page 3 of the office action as surrounding the cover (10) is part of the vent frame and not the cover (10). It is noted that the flanges (11) are not a recessed peripheral border as claimed by Applicant because the flanges (11) fold and are initially in the plane of the sheet cover (10).

Claim 1 also recites that the rectangular panel of unitary construction has an integral recessed inner surface surrounded by an integral projecting peripheral border, said recessed inner surface being recessed relative to the projecting peripheral border and being provided with integral projecting reinforcing ribs which extend across the width of the panels. These features are not disclosed or suggested by Crofoot.

The integral recessed inner surface surrounded by an integral projecting peripheral border, where the recessed inner surface is recessed relative to the projecting peripheral border is not disclosed in Crofoot for reasons substantially similar to those described above. In particular, the cover (10) in Crofoot, which is asserted to be the recessed inner surface (see page 3 of the Office Action) is a separate component from the vent frame. As can be seen in Figure 2 and as described above, the cover (10) in Crofoot is a flat sheet of material with foldable edges (i.e. flanges (11)) for retaining the cover within the vent frame. The cover (10) in Crofoot simply does not have a recessed inner surface as recited by Applicant.

Furthermore, the projecting ribs (4) of Crofoot referred to by the Examiner are not part of the cover (10) but are instead part of the peripheral wall (1) of the vent frame. Thus, the projecting ribs (4) do not "reinforce" the cover (10) in any way. There is absolutely no disclosure or suggestion in Crofoot that the sheet cover (10) has "projecting reinforcing ribs" as claimed in Applicant's claim 1. Moreover, the ribs (4) in Crofoot do not project from a "recessed inner surface" of the cover (10) and are not "surrounded by" a "projecting peripheral border" as called for in Applicant's claim 1. The ribs (4) in Crofoot project from the exterior of the walls (1) of the vent frame (Col. 2, L. 33-38; Figs. 4-7 and 10). As can clearly be seen in the Figures of Crofoot, the ribs (4) are not surrounded by a "projecting peripheral border". Surrounding the ribs (4) by a "projecting peripheral border" as recited by Applicant would render the ribs unsuited for their intended purposes which is to anchor the vent frame in the poured concrete wall.

Combining Snyder with Crofoot fails to remedy the above noted deficiencies. Snyder discloses a connector frame (10) for use as a support member for mounting grills at the ventilation openings of a building's heating, cooling and ventilation (HVAC) system (Col. 1, L. 14-18). There is absolutely no disclosure whatsoever in Snyder of a vent cover as recited in Applicant's claim 1. All that Snyder discloses is that a "commonly manufactured" grill (32) (See Fig. 4; Col. 5, L. 6-8) can be mounted on the connector frame (12) by a pair of threaded screws (33, 34). The screws (33, 34) pass through mounting holes (37, 38) in the grill (32) and are inserted into open apertures in the frame projections (21, 22) (Col. 4, L. 6-10). As can be seen in Figure 4, the grill (32) does not have a flat outer surface surrounded by a recessed peripheral border provided with a plurality of holes for receiving attachment means for fastening the cover to a crawlspace wall. The grill (32) has louvers for the passage of air and the holes (37, 38) are not located on a recessed peripheral border. Furthermore, there is no disclosure of the grill (32) in Snyder having reinforcing ribs as called for in Applicant's claim 1.

Snyder is only cited by the Examiner as disclosing a vent cover having a plurality of screw holes (150) (cited in the office action as holes 105) in the flange portion of the frame (See page 3 of the office action). However, these screw holes (150) are not located in a vent cover. Rather these holes (150) are located on the connector frame (10) and allow for the mounting of the connector frame (10) and nothing more. It is noted that the grill (32) is mounted to the connector frame via holes (162) or holes (164). (Col. 5, L. 44-61).

Combining Crute with Crofoot and Snyder fails to remedy the above noted deficiencies of Crofoot and Snyder. Crute discloses a vent closure having a flat closing wall portion (20) terminating at a peripheral edge (22) and a single central hole defined by sleeve (32), for mounting bolt (34) (Col. 2, L. 4-7 and L. 20-29; Fig. 2). The edge (22) or flange of Crute is not disclosed as having any holes whatsoever (See Figs. 1-2). Nowhere does Crute disclose or suggest a recessed peripheral border with a plurality of holes for receiving attachment means for fastening the cover to the wall as called for in claim 1. Furthermore, there is absolutely no disclosure of the vent closure having reinforcing ribs as claimed by Applicant. All that Crute discloses is that the sleeve (32) maintains the inner and outer wall portions in a spaced relationship upon tightening of the wing nut on the bolt (34) (Col. 2, L. 64-68).

Thus, the combination of Crofoot, Snyder and Crute does not disclose or suggest an air vent cover comprising a rectangular panel of unitary construction molded from durable plastic composition with an integral flat outer surface surrounded by an integral recessed peripheral border, the recessed peripheral border being recessed relative to the flat outer surface and being provided with a plurality of holes for receiving attachment means for fastening the cover to a crawlspace wall and an integral recessed inner surface surrounded by an integral projecting peripheral border, said recessed inner surface being recessed relative to the projecting peripheral border and being provided with integral projecting reinforcing ribs which extend across the width of the panels to reinforce the panels against warpage when they are fastened to the crawlspace wall as recited in Applicant's claim 1.

Claims 2-5 are patentable at least by reason of their respective dependencies.

Further, Claim 4 recites that the reinforcing ribs project outwardly from the recessed surface of the cover a distance equal to the extent of the recess. The combination of Crofoot, Snyder and Crute fails to disclose or suggest this feature.

Crofoot is cited by the Examiner as having projecting ribs (4), but as noted above the ribs (4) are located on the exterior of the walls (1) of the vent frame and not the sheet cover (10). As can be clearly seen in Figure 2 of Crofoot the ribs (4) are not located within a "recess" and therefore cannot "project outwardly from the recessed surface" "a distance equal to the extent of the recess" as recited in claim 4. There is absolutely no disclosure or suggestion in Crofoot or any of the other cited references that reinforcing ribs project outwardly from the recessed surface of said cover a distance equal to the extent of the recess. Therefore, claim 4 is patentable for this additional reason.

Claim 5 recites a pair of reinforcing ribs spaced from each other by a distance of about 3". The combination of Crofoot, Snyder and Crute fails to disclose or suggest this feature.

As described above, Crofoot, Snyder and Crute do not disclose or suggest a vent cover with reinforcing ribs. Thus, the combination of Crofoot, Snyder and Crute cannot disclose or suggest a pair of reinforcing ribs spaced from each other by a distance of about 3". It is further noted that while Crofoot discloses ribs (4) there is no disclosure or suggestion as to the spacing of the ribs (4). Thus, Crofoot cannot disclose or suggest that the ribs (4) are spaced from each other by a

distance of about 3" as claimed by Applicant. Therefore, claim 5 is patentable.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment for any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 16-1350.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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